

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

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SPOT COMMENTARY: Status of TWA Hijacking/Hostages

There have been few significant developments in the hostage situation since early this morning.

--Nabih Barri told the press this afternoon that he hoped to arrive at a resolution of the crisis by Sunday.

--An aide to Barri stated earlier today, however, that his own hopes for an end to the hostage situation by the weekend had now dimmed.

--The hijackers reportedly refused the Swiss government's offer to have the hostages transferred to the Swiss Embassy in Beirut. The Swiss earlier refused to accept the hijackers' conditions that the hostages be held in the embassy until after the prisoners are released. [redacted]

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Conflicting reports continue to surface concerning the whereabouts of the hostages.

--We continue to believe that all of the TWA passengers are being held in the Beirut suburbs.

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--Earlier reports that one of the passengers had been released were denied by an Amal spokesman. [redacted]

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According to the press, an Israeli official said that Israel will continue to gradually release the 735 Lebanese prisoners, but the official said that any release will be according to Israeli considerations. He said there is no deal and no linkage to the hostage crisis. [redacted]

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We believe that Amal continues to seek firm assurances that Israel will release all its Lebanese prisoners promptly before Barri's proposal to send the passengers to Damascus is implemented. We are concerned about the possibility that Hizballah elements will refuse to release the hostages they hold even if a deal is reached, or that some fanatics could try to kill a hostage or carry out a new terrorist act to sabotage any deal. [redacted]

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